

NEW DUO PUSH CLAIM TO MEET DULWICH

NEWCOMERS Barry Davies and Alan Gane could well have played themselves into the Wycombe Wanderers line-up to start their defence of the Isthmian League title against revitalised Dulwich Hamlet at Loakes Park tomorrow (3 p.m.).

But Phil Wood, former St. Albans City 'sweeper' wavering in pre-season friendlies between the Blues and Enfield, looks almost certain to be missing.

If so, it could prove something of a blow to Wycombe, searching for a fresh defensive partner to centre half John Delaney. Immediate successor would appear to be ex-Maidenhead United player, Gerry Olsen, a reliable, stern competitor.

However, like other contender Dave Bullock, his major asset is heading power. Neither could totally compensate the ground control that made Powell the perfect foil to the towering Delaney.

Enfield manager, Howard Moxon named Wood earlier this week among the 13 from which he selects his side for their first outings at Tooting and Mitcham. Neither club were 100 per cent sure which way Wood would turn.

EYE INJURY

After playing for the Southbury Road outfit in a friendly the previous Monday, Wood spent 60 minutes in Wycombe blue last Saturday before a cut below an eye forced his retirement from the 1-1 draw with Altrincham. He later had two stitches.

Wood did not appear either in Enfield's impressive 2-0 defeat of Belgian visitors De Schaevbeck on Monday, or Wycombe's 3-0 triumph over Bedford on Tuesday.

Earlier this week, Wanderers were uncertain what his final choice would be.

In attack, Mick Holfield's tenacious pre-season form suggests they need look no further afield for a replacement number ten after the retirement of long serving Tony Horseman.

Little of the former Oxford City player's true ability was seen in anything but flashes during a chequered season last time around. But — an inch taller, a stone heavier than Horseman — Holfield is nonetheless cast in much the same mould and should fit in well with spearhead Keith Searle.

BRIMMING

In a squad initially brimming over with midfield talent, the role of third frontrunner is less obviously solved. The immediate candidates all have a speciality to offer — Bernie Bremer (a dynamic shot), Trevor Waughman (neat footwork), and John Hutchinson (plenty of running).

But their past form suggests none presents the complete answer. Possibly the club's wealth of midfield class could make an impact by the selection of Alan Gane, formerly British Universities.

First and foremost a link-man, he scored with a thundering long range shot to force a draw against Altrincham. He offers a high work rate, much initiative, and clear attacking aggression — three qualities that could win him the third place.

While Robb Williams and Larry Pritchard can virtually be termed as automatic choices in midfield, the other spot would seem destined for Barry Davies.

The Welsh amateur 'cap' from Leatherhead staked an unarguable claim in his two outings to date.

The substitutes bench would, under these circumstances, most



The 'ins' and 'outs' of Wycombe's new season . . . Micky Mellows (left) is to play Belgian professionals Ostend next season, while Gerry Olsen has been around Loakes Park. They are pictured duelling for possession in last season's County Cup clash in which Olsen played a key role in the Maidenhead defence, against Wycombe.

FIVE COACHES

likely be left for Hutchinson, Bremer (missed the Altrincham game due to a wedding) or Waughman (back from holiday).

Both Hutchinson and Paul Birdseye tested injuries against Bedford and appeared to come through all right. Delaney and Ian Rundle sat the game out with ankle trouble.

John however declared himself hopeful of making the big kick off and the club report Ian also has a good chance.

Nothing has been seen at Loakes Park so far of full back Chris Austin, who was said at the time to have been 'loaned' back to Hellenic League Witney for the later stages of last season.

Meanwhile, tomorrow could be a tough baptism for the Blues, as they attempt a hat-trick of Isthmian titles.

Watch out Wycombe! That is a crystal clear message from

South Londoners, Dulwich.

Although the warning may seem laughable on last season's form, Dulwich are now a force to be reckoned with. The reason is the arrival of South London bookmaker Jimmy Rose.

His magnetic personality has attracted a flock of first class players to Champion Hill, including internationals Ken Jelly and Trevor Bladon, both with Sutton United last year.

Manager Rose has five coaches to help him and with a couple of friendly victories tucked under his belt — Blyth Spartans were thrashed 5-1 and Southern Leaguers Merthyr Tydfil beaten 2-0 — Rose has every reason to be oozing with confidence.

Although a victory against Wycombe would not surprise the verbose Rose, he realistically admits that a draw would be a springboard start for a revived Dulwich.

"We are all looking forward to starting our assault on the league by taking two points from Wycombe," said Rose, "I think we should do well."

Rose is awaiting the outcome of Wednesday's practice game to decide whether to play Micky Pratt or ex-Chelsea utility player Steve Rogers. Pratt got a hat-trick against Blyth on Saturday, while Rogers powered home a shot from just outside the centre circle.

International Bladon returns to the back four after a two week holiday, but tricky forward Charlie Pooley, whom Arsenal tried to sign late last season, is out through injury as is mid-field man David Burke, waiting to see a Harley Street specialist.

Ex-Walton midfield star, Chris Gedney, is named in a probably side reading:

DULWICH: Parsons, Brooks, Baker, Bladon, Gaydon, P. Smith, Jelly, Gedney, Davidson, G. Smith, Major, Sub. Rogers.